

The measure provides funding for our troops while establishing a responsible timeline for their withdrawal

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(Washington, D.C.) - Congressman Albio Sires joined the majority of his colleagues today by voting in support of the conference report for the U.S. Troops Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act. The measure sets timelines for the redeployment of U.S. combat troops from Iraq, similar to those suggested by the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and provides needed funding to support our troops.

"The majority of Americans support a timeline for the redeployment of our troops and a new direction in Iraq," said Congressman Sires. "It is time to transition our brave men and women from combat missions to the training of Iraqi troops."

This measure requests \$124.2 billion and provides \$4 billion more for our troops than was requested by the President. This includes funding for the replacement and upgrades of tanks and vehicles being used by our troops to ensure their safety while they are in Iraq, as well as funding for a Strategic Reserve Readiness Fund to ensure our troops' readiness needs are met. Funding was also included for military health care and housing, so we can ensure they are cared for once they return home. In addition, this bill honors our veterans by providing \$1.8 billion to begin meeting the health care needs of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

H.R. 1591 also sets goals for the redeployment of American troops based on the progress made by the Iraqi government in meeting diplomatic and security benchmarks. Redeployment would begin, at the very latest, in October 2007, with a goal of being completed by March 2008. The measure also ensures that our troops get adequate rest between tours of duty and that their service in Iraq not be extended beyond one year.

"I urge President Bush to sign the U.S. Troops Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act," said Congressman Sires. "This week alone, nine American soldiers were killed and 20 were wounded and we owe it to all of our troops and to their families to support their courageous efforts with this important funding. However, I believe we must also find a way to bring closure to a conflict that seems endless, unless we change the current strategy."